

VZCZCXRO8464
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHTRO
DE RUEHYN #2062/01 3191506
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 151506Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3201
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1701
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 002062

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND INR SMOFFAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FM WANTS TO DISCUSS "HIDDEN AGENDAS"

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C/NF) SUMMARY. Deputy FM Al-Dhabbi told Ambassador Seche in a meeting November 10 that he looks forward to a candid exchange to clarify our agendas and views in relation to the ROYG conflict with the Houthis which, he noted, the ROYG, considers as an immediate threat compared to that posed by Al-Qaeda. Al-Dhabbi agreed to a strategic dialogue in advance of a visit by the Foreign Minister to Washington. When recounting his informal meetings with Secretary Clinton at the Forum for the Future, Al-Dhabbi said he explained to her details of the Houthi conflict. END SUMMARY.

A Hidden Agenda?

[12](#). (C/NF) Deputy Foreign Minister Mohy Al-Dhabbi, in a November 10 meeting with Ambassador Seche, expressed the desire to engage with the Ambassador in an informal, non-official review to examine our concerns and to clarify our differences regarding the ROYG's conflict with the Houthis. He reflected that maybe "there is information one of us is not sharing." The Ambassador responded that the U.S. has no hidden agenda and, thus far, no information to corroborate ROYG accusations of Iranian involvement in the conflict.

[13](#). (C/NF) Al-Dhabbi continued, stating that the ROYG sees the Houthis as the immediate threat, characterizing Al-Qaeda as a long-term threat. The ROYG believes there is a policy of others, e.g., Iran, Shi'as, to support the Houthis. This third-party support and the Houthis' recent incursion into Saudi Arabia, makes this conflict so serious, he said. There are questions in the ROYG about the reluctance of the U.S. and EU to support the ROYG's vision as shown by their public messages, Al-Dhabbi said, referring to recent EU and U.S. declarations.

Al-Dhabbi Agrees to a Strategic Dialogue

[14](#). (C/NF) Before FM Qirbi's proposed visit to Washington, Al-Dhabbi agreed it was important to engage in a strategic dialogue to create better conditions for the visit. Al-Dhabbi said he had a meeting with all relevant cabinet ministers and they are preparing documents to give to the U.S. so we can agree on points to be presented officially; a time to share information would be essential. In this respect, Al-Dhabbi said he is looking forward to the proposed mid-December Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University symposium to meet with participants and enhance our dialogue.

¶5. (C) Al-Dhabbi practically glowed with pride as he detailed his informal meetings with Secretary Clinton at the recent Forum for the Future conference in Marrakech. Al-Dhabbi recounted how she picked him out in the crowded room, greeted him, sat next to him, and how they briefly reflected on issues of U.S. and Yemeni interest, including the conflict in the North with the Houthis, the issues in the South, and socio-economic development. He said her speech was good and was a message to people not to lose hope as the U.S. puts into action President Obama's plan as outlined in his Cairo speech.

¶6. (C/NF) Al-Dhabbi said Secretary Clinton asked him how the ROYG can manage between the Houthis and Al-Qaeda. He said he informed her they are both threats and if they concentrate on the Houthis they cannot confront Al-Qaeda, but the ROYG regards the Houthis as the more immediate threat, given their plans to expand their territory to take land on the Red Sea. Al-Dhabbi rejected any statements calling the Houthis the "opposition," saying that message gives them a legitimacy they should not have; they are armed insurgents and have no political party into which they can be integrated. The Ambassador agreed this was a mischaracterization. Al-Dhabbi characterized the Houthis as "another Hizballah."

Comment

SANAA 00002062 002 OF 002

¶7. (C/NF) While Al-Dhabbi was pleased with his exchanges with Secretary Clinton, he expressed deep concerns that the U.S. does not support the ROYG in its fight against the Houthis. He seems to believe an open discussion of all our concerns and sharing of information can persuade the U.S. to support the ROYG in its priorities. We continue to have strong disagreements on the nature of the threats in Yemen and look to such a meeting as another opportunity to convince the ROYG that its single-minded focus on the Houthis is diverting attention and resources from other pressing issues. END COMMENT.

SECHE